The University of Baltimore is launching a two-year investigation called "Baltimore'68: Riots and Rebirth," a project centered around the events that followed the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and their effects on the development of our city. UB administration and faculty members in the law school and in the undergraduate departments of history and community studies are planning a series of projects and events to commemorate the 40th anniversary of this pivotal event. We are currently working with the Reginald F. Lewis Museum of Maryland African American History, The Jewish Museum of Maryland, Maryland Public Television and the Enoch Pratt Free Libraries to pursue funding for projects that may include conferences, a website and a library traveling exhibit.

Your potential participation in an oral history project would contribute to the very foundation of this project – the memories of Baltimoreans who lived through the riots and saw the changes that came about in response to them. Your life story can fill in the limited knowledge we learn from newspaper accounts and the television footage.

If you choose to participate in the project you would be interviewed by students from the University of Baltimore. They will ask you questions, but your memories will determine the direction of the interviews.

If you agree to serve as an oral history informant in this project, you will meet with a team of undergraduate students. The students will take a still photograph of you. In addition, if you have a photo of yourself in or around 1968, we would greatly appreciate it if we could borrow it, scan it, and return it. We would reserve the rights to reproduce those photos and use them on the website, conferences, exhibit or publications.

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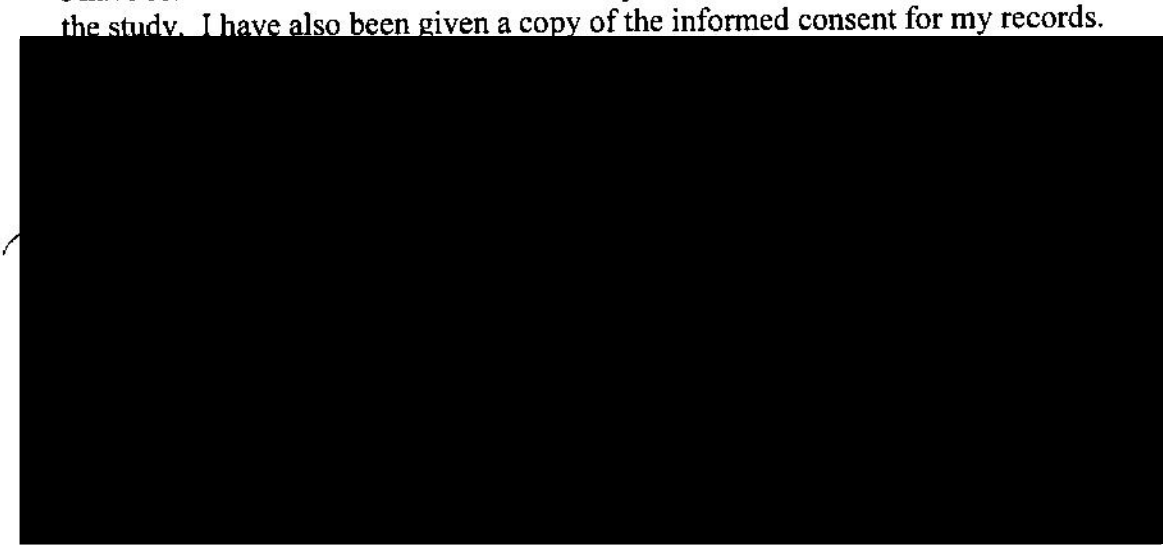
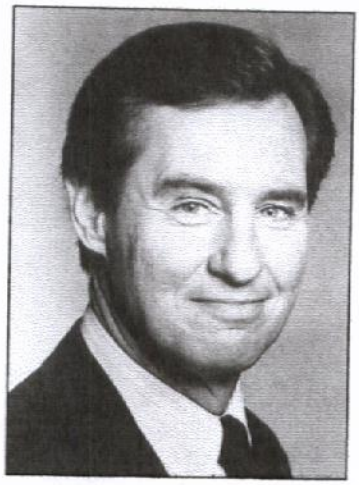
If you have any questions about this project, please feel free to contact me at 410-837-5296. Thank you for your participation.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth M. Nix, Ph.D.
Visiting Assistant Professor
History and Community Studies
The University of Baltimore

I have read and understand the information provided above, and consent to participate in the study. I have also been given a copy of the informed consent for my records.





Jack Bowden

Jack Bowden, who began his broadcasting career in radio news, was hired by Baltimore's WBAL-TV Channel 11 in 1966. In 1967 he went to WMAR-TV Channel 2, where he worked for the next 21 years as a reporter, winning various awards. For 16 of those years he also anchored the 6 and 7 PM weeknight newscasts, and was producer/anchor of the Sunday newscasts. In 1979 he married fellow Channel 2 reporter Susan White, and the following year they began co-anchoring the noon news together, which quickly became the city's top rated newscast.

In 1991, Jack joined WJLA-TV Channel 7 in Washington, D.C. as the Maryland correspondent and as anchor of the weekend morning and evening newscasts. He won an Emmy in 1995. He also served as first vice president of the D.C.-Baltimore AFTRA Board of Directors between 1982 and 1996.

After retiring in 1998, he and Susan co-authored the book, "Off Season, Living the Retirement Dream," published this year by the Baltimore Sun. He also continues working in the freelance field.

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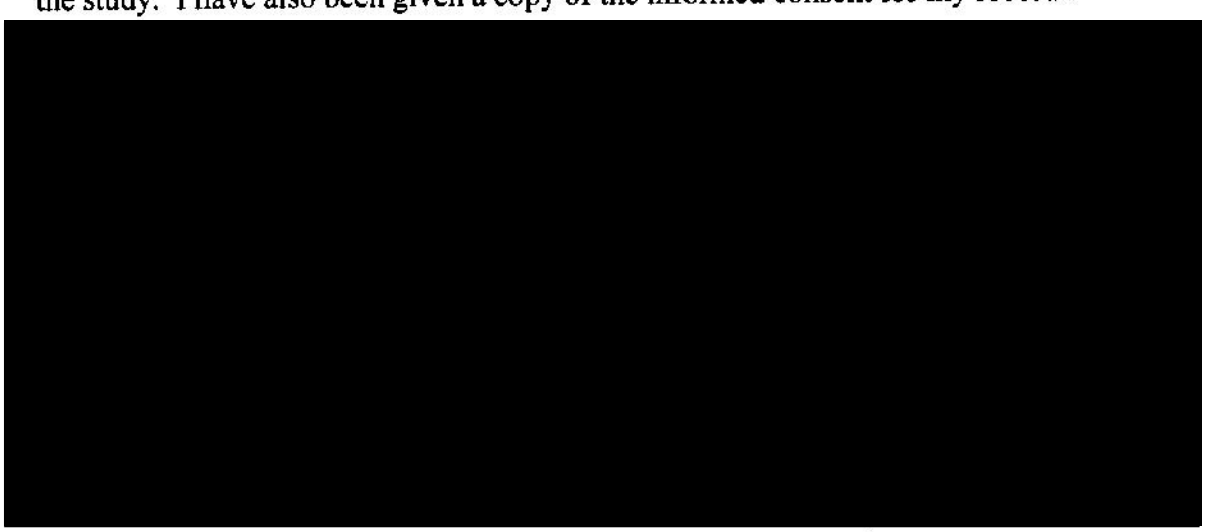

Susan White-Bowden

Susan White-Bowden started her 30-year television career in 1963 as a freelance model doing live and taped commercials. In 1966 she entered TV news, first as a writer and then as a reporter at WBAL-TV Channel 11 in Baltimore. The following year she was hired by WMAR-TV Channel 2 as the first female news reporter in that station's history.

Susan spent 22 years at Channel 2 as a reporter/anchor and as the producer, writer and host of many specials and documentaries — winning numerous awards for her work on TV and in the community. Susan's marriage to colleague Jack Bowden in 1979 brought them together on air as well as off; co-anchoring a top rated newscast and co-hosting the annual Jerry Lewis Telethon for Muscular Dystrophy, raising donations above a million dollars for the first time.

In 1985, with the publication of her first book "Everything to Live For," about her teenaged son's suicide, Susan faced the other side of the microphone, appearing on such programs as Oprah, Good Morning America and Regis Philbin. To date she has written five books. After leaving WMAR in 1989 she was seen on Public TV documentaries and specials in Maryland, Virginia and D.C.

Interview with Jack Bowden and Susan White-Bowden
26 April 2007
Interviewer: Nyasha Chikowore
Transcribed by Maria Paoletti

Nyasha: So, please state your full name.

Jack Bowden: John J. Bowden, B-O-W-D-E-N; I'm known as 'Jack'.

Susan White-Bowden: Susan White-Bowden, hyphenated name, W-H-I-T-E-hyphen-B-O-W-D-E-N. And I was Susan White during the time period we'll be talking about, and then I married Jack Bowden.

Nyasha: And when did you get married?

Jack Bowden: 1979!

Susan White-Bowden: Good, Jack. *[laughter]* June 10, 1979.

Jack Bowden: June 10, 1979.

Nyasha: Okay, so how old were you guys in 1968, if you don't mind?

Jack Bowden: Thirty…let's see, '68, I was thirty-five.

Susan White-Bowden: '68, I was, um…how old was I, Jack? I was born in '39, so I was thirty.

Jack Bowden: Yeah. Twenty-nine.

Susan White-Bowden: Twenty-nine.

Jack Bowden: Yeah.

Susan White-Bowden: …I was *young*! *[laughter]*

Nyasha: So, do you remember where you lived or worked at that time?

Jack Bowden: Yes. I lived in…I was in an apartment in Mount Washington.

Susan White-Bowden: And worked?

Jack Bowden: WMAR-TV.

Susan White-Bowden: I lived where we now live, in Carroll County. Finksburg, Maryland, on a family farm, and I worked at WMAR Channel 2.

Nyasha: And where was the station located?

Susan White-Bowden: York Road.

Jack Bowden: York Road.

Susan White-Bowden: Where it's been…well, it's been there all my career.

Jack Bowden: Yeah, both…it was originally downtown, but they moved to York Road.

Nyasha: And do you remember where you shopped back in '68, like groceries, or clothes?

Jack Bowden: Well, let's see…where did I shop? Usually at the Giant…hm.

Susan White-Bowden: You sure there was a Giant then, Jack? We're testing our—

Jack Bowden: Yes, probably the Giant on Reisterstown Road, I think. I can't remember. There was another one in the Mount Washington shopping center, or whatever that shopping center is called. You know, where I go to the doctor now, what's that shopping center?

Susan White-Bowden: Greenspring.

Jack Bowden: Greenspring.

Susan White-Bowden: There was an Acme supermarket on North Charles Street that I often went to after I left Channel 2; I swung around York Road to North Charles Street on my way home to Carroll County, so I often shopped there. Across from Channel 2, there was a—

Jack Bowden: Oh, that's right, that's where I shopped. The Giant next to Channel 2. Sure.

Susan White-Bowden: Right, and there was…across the street there was a nice shopping center with Stewart's department store and a drugstore that I went to all the time. I'm not sure the name of the drugstore; I don't know that it was, I don't think it was a Rite-Aid, it was something—anyway, at that time there was a very nice shopping mall around there, so I did a lot close to work, on the way home.

Jack Bowden: Yeah, that's what I did. We'd come out of work and I'd go right next door to the Giant, which was right next door to the Golden Arm Restaurant, which was owned by Johnny Unitas.

Susan White-Bowden: Yeah. So, we spent a lot of time at Channel 2. A lot of people think that television reporters, it's a very easy life, you go in, and you go on the air for two minutes. You work all day for that two minutes. So we worked ten, twelve hours a day. So most of our time truly was spent on the job, so we did our shopping close by.

Nyasha: And before the riots, what kinds of interactions did you have with people of other races?

Jack Bowden: Well, because of the job, quite a lot. Did stories in all the communities of the city, I worked in…my primary beat was politics, so…you know, minority members on the city council, legislature, I knew many of them quite well.

Susan White-Bowden: The truth is, there weren't many black people hired at Channel 2 in 1968.

Jack Bowden: Or at any of the TV stations.

Susan White-Bowden: There were very few.

Nyasha: Not even behind the scenes?

Susan White-Bowden: Very few.

Jack Bowden: Yeah.

Susan White-Bowden: Very few. In fact, it was protested. I don't know what that date was, when—

Jack Bowden: Yeah, I don't remember.

Susan White-Bowden: Civil rights groups protested black employment at Channel 2.

Jack Bowden: Or lack of.

Susan White-Bowden: Or lack of, but yes. Even stating to the general manager, "You even have someone on the air *named* 'Susan *White*!'"

Jack Bowden: White. Yeah, right! *[laughs]*

Nyasha: Wow.

Jack Bowden: The first on air was Chuck…Richards.

Susan White-Bowden. Richards, right. And that was early on.

Jack Bowden: He was the first.

Susan White-Bowden: He was very good—

Jack Bowden: He was a singer…uh, with Count Basie. And he was the staff announcer, and he did on-air stuff, and…but he was pretty much it. And then the first reporter was…why can't I think of his name?

Susan White-Bowden: I don't know. I don't know who you're—

Jack Bowden: George…*[snapping fingers]*…you know…

Susan White-Bowden: Collins?

Jack Bowden: Collins!

Susan White-Bowden: George Collins from *The Afro-American*. He had worked in print and was editor, wasn't he? Of *The Afro-American*?

Jack Bowden: I think so, yeah.

Susan White-Bowden: And he was the first reporter—on-air reporter—that was hired at Channel 2.

Jack Bowden: Channel 13 had…one, Wiley Daniels…

Susan White-Bowden: 11, I don't know.

Jack Bowden: Bob Matthews, I think, but that may have been later.

Susan White-Bowden: Yeah, he was there. He hired *me*.

Jack Bowden: He was the news director there, that's right. It was just the beginning. It was just—I mean, she *[Susan]* was the first *female* at Channel 2, in the news department. So, all this was changing, the minorities, the women who were beginning to be brought in…it was reluctant on the part of management, but they were bowing to public pressure; it was *beginning* to change, but it was really just the beginning.

Nyasha: So, did you have any interactions that were *social* with other races? Outside of work?

Jack Bowden: Let's see…yeah, I mean, with Chuck…uh, who else? I'm trying to think of who I was friends with…

Susan White-Bowden: You know, it was limited—I'll tell you why it was limited for me, is because we spent so much time at work, and you *did* associate with the people you worked with; I even married a co-worker. And I lived in Carroll County, which was pretty white—

Jack Bowden: Yeah, and…it was Reggie Daniels, was at work—

Susan White-Bowden: When was Reggie—?

Jack Bowden: He was there then! So there *was* somebody behind the scenes, he was a cameraman.

Susan White-Bowden: So we socialized with him, and he was a film cameraman. He still works in the Baltimore area in film and production. And we were very friendly, so we socialized. It wasn't a matter of black and white, it was a matter of who we had contact with.

Jack Bowden: Yeah. There weren't a lot of friends outside of business.

Nyasha: So, how would you describe the racial mood in Baltimore before the riots?

Jack Bowden: Ooh. Getting better, but not good…I mean, we were in the midst of finally coming around to living up to what the Constitution said, but it was still in the process. And there was a lot of pent-up anger and frustration, understandably.

Susan White-Bowden: I'm searching for the word that I want…it definitely was still very segregated. Not a lot of tolerance. No, our mayor at that time, William Donald Schaefer—

Jack Bowden: No, it was Tommy D'Alessandro.

Susan White-Bowden: Yeah, but it was Schaefer, when did he become mayor?

Jack Bowden: After that.

Susan White-Bowden: After that. It was after that. He really made a difference in bringing communities together.

Jack Bowden: Well, Tommy did too, but he was in this difficult period, things were changing, and this happened. And they killed Martin Luther King, and he happened to be mayor at the time. And all the…that brought it all out, it was the catalyst.

Nyasha: So do you remember covering any stories, like, before the riots about the racial mood, or segregation, desegregation?

Jack Bowden: Oh, yeah! God, even when I was working at WBAL Radio, back in the '60s—I mean early '60s, from '60 on—I did a lot, I did a special program once a week, and I did stories with the black Muslims. And…I did a lot of different groups, I also did American Nazi Party. Things like that. I interviewed Malcolm X when he came to Baltimore. So yeah, there was interaction and we were trying to understand what was going on, I mean, the world was changing.

Susan White-Bowden: I did a lot of feature stories and positive stories, and some of them did involve people who were reaching out to different races, blacks to white, whites to black, community efforts, but there weren't as many as later. There weren't as many people who were making a real effort to step over the racial lines.

Jack Bowden: And there were these extreme groups, such as the American Nazi Party, which had a chapter locally; I remember interviewing the father and son who headed that, and also George Lincoln Rockwell, who headed the American Nazi Party, came to town to be interviewed by me and Al Quinn, who had been this legendary Sun Papers reporter, and who was now working at WBAL Radio. And he came in his Cadillac, with two Nazi flags on the front fenders, and made it a point to drive through the black community on his way, hoping to stir up some trouble. But it was that kind of really…

Susan White-Bowden: In-your-face.

Jack Bowden: In-your-face…there was the segregation at the amusement park, which caused the demonstrations and all that. It was still a very much black-and-white—

Susan White-Bowden: There were people who were adamant that they would not segregate, that we would not blend the races. There were people taking stands. You were talking about Gwynn Oak Junction, Gwynn Oak Amusement Park. There were demonstrations *there* because the management wouldn't open the doors.

Jack Bowden: That was earlier than the riots, yeah.

Susan White-Bowden: Yeah, and that was before the riots. I mean, segregation across race and religion, I still remember—and this has nothing to do with what we're talking about—but I remember as a child I went to Sylvan Dell Quarry, I swam there. And I had just learned to sound out words, I guess I was about seven years old. And we drove up, my mother was taking me there, and there was this big sign that said *Gentiles Only*. And I said to my mother, "What a gentile?" And she said, "Don't worry about it, you are one."

Nyasha: Wow.

Susan White-Bowden: "Wow" is right.

Jack Bowden: Yeah, I remember signs saying *No Jews or Dogs Allowed* at swimming pools. So there were all kinds of things like that back then. So it was still going on, and what happened in '68 was just the…you know, it set it off.

Susan White-Bowden: Right. It became intolerable.

Nyasha: So…well, this is where we start talking about the riots. What do you remember about the assassination of Martin Luther King?

Jack Bowden: Oh, that it was shocking. Just incredible. And of course, city after city just began to go. I was out to dinner—we were talking on the way down here—I was out to dinner with my *then*-wife, my previous wife, and her brother who was in town from

Wales, and the management announced that a curfew had been imposed and everyone was to leave and go home. And of course, I went to work. And I remember somebody, some man had worked the night shift and had no idea what was going on, and he got off early in the morning, he's walking home as he always did and suddenly he's beset by this mob. And the cops had to go rescue him. He had no idea.

Nyasha: This was a white man?

Jack Bowden: I can't remember whether he was white or black. I can't remember, but somebody…this poor guy had no idea what was going on, and he, you know, was amazed. I can't remember which way it was, but I'm sure there were many incidents like that. And then everybody just knew what was going on after that.

Susan White-Bowden: It was the initial shock and sadness of this wonderful human being, but then, as…for the news people, it all became such traumatic turmoil, so fast, when the cities started erupting and burning and rioting and the focus was switched from the sadness of losing this wonderful person to how to control what had happened as a result of it.

Nyasha: So is that what was going on in the newsroom?

Jack Bowden: Well, of course, we were pretty much, that's primarily the only story we were doing every day. We'd go down to…usually we would go down to the Fifth Regiment Armory, which is where the National Guard was. That was the headquarters for everybody. The mayor, everybody went there. General Gelston—

Nyasha: What was that name?

Jack Bowden: Gelston.

Nyasha: How do you spell that?

Jack Bowden: G-E-L-S-T-O-N. He was in charge of the National Guard. And we'd go there every day. I remember one day, some tear gas canisters broke and we were all walking around crying, because tear gases permeated the entire Fifth Regiment Armory. But every day we were exposed to tear gas during, you know, as they were porting down groups of people and they were trying to chase crowds, crowds of whites *and* blacks, trying to get at each other.

One of my memories is of…we were in a park. I was there, Wiley Daniels from Channel 13, I assume some other reporters, and I can't remember what park. It was a small park in the city. And there was this line, this phalanx of National Guardsmen, with their guns. Now, they weren't supposed to use any bullets; they were supposed to keep unloaded weapons to avoid any problems. But some of them had bullets. And they had bayonets. Anyway, a groups of blacks assembled, and there was a lot of anger; I forget what was said, but anyway, they starting moving. We're standing in the middle, the Guard's down here, this group of people is coming at us. And clearly, it was going to be a violent clash. People were going to get hurt, maybe killed. And Wiley Daniels—

Susan White-Bowden: Who was black—

Jack Bowden: —got up on this park bench, and he says, "Hey! You all know who I am, I'm Wiley Daniels, Channel 13…*please* stop. Just listen to me." And finally, he talked to them about how, you know, *people are going to get hurt or killed here today, it's not worth this, please, we can talk, I'll try to intervene, maybe we can talk about what's going on*. Because there was resentment to the shutdown of their communities, the military was coming through and all that. Anyway, he did what you're not supposed to do as a reporter; he got involved, he became part of the story. And that's one of the few times I can say I'm glad he did, or any reporter did, and I mentioned on the air that night, on *my* channel, I said, "Channel 13's Wiley Daniels prevented what could have been an extremely violent confrontation." And they did, they turned around, and they stopped, and there was no violence. So that was incredible. And my station allowed me to say that on the air about a reporter from another station getting involved and preventing violence.

But to go into these communities and see the fires…because the people turned on the merchants primarily; that's where their anger was focused. On the whites and the Asians who had stores and shops in their communities, and they would loot them and they'd burn them, but in the process they were destroying their neighborhoods, some of which still haven't recovered. They're still shells of what they used to be. And it was very sad to watch; people were being shot, people were being killed in all kinds of ways.

And then the day that Governor Agnew called all the black leaders together and blamed them, and I remember being at the Fifth Regiment Armory and the Mayor D'Alessandro and General Gelston were saying, "What the hell's wrong with that man? Doesn't he have any idea what's going on? It's like pouring gasoline on a fire!" So they had to redouble their efforts to go out and try to calm things down. And the black leaders, they were out there in the community, Clarence Mitchell and people like that were out there trying to keep things calm and to keep the lid on. So, it didn't last…it was only a few days, but boy, it was *brutal*. And it was scary. All that pent-up emotion was out there.

I remember this cameraman and I went with the National Guard; that was our story that day, and we rode with them in the truck and we went up to North Avenue near the old Poly High School, which is now school headquarters, and they got out of the trucks and they marched. They marched up and down the street—a show of force. And then the trucks came back and picked up the soldiers, the National Guardsmen, and left. And the only two white people left there were the cameraman and me. And it was a little scary, because they were saying things to us, and they were coming toward us, and then this car suddenly pulls up, and the guy says, "Hey, Joe!" He knew the cameraman. And Joe said, "Can you give us a ride?" So we got in the car, and we went "Wow!" Thank God, and then one of the guys in the car held up a gun. And he said, "We're gonna go shoot some niggers." We looked at each other and said, "Can you drop us up there at the corner?" And I thought *God*! So we walked back to our car.

Susan White-Bowden: That's the kind of climate.

Jack Bowden: That's the kind of climate.

Susan White-Bowden: I'll share a story about my side of, my point of view. Women didn't cover violent stories then. They weren't allowed to. I mean, there weren't many women reporters. I was the only one at Channel 2. There weren't many at the other stations. And they would not let me cover any stories that were directly related. I wanted to go in and talk to families, I wanted to talk to mothers that I *knew* were there—I knew the stories were there—who were trying to talk their sons out of…staying out of the street, staying away from harm's way, staying away from causing trouble or burning and looting. I knew it was there, but they wouldn't let me go in and do it.

What they sent me out to do was, it was close to Easter, in April, and they sent me down to the state office building, which is near the Fifth Regiment Armory, where all the troops were forming, to do a story about the advisability of dying baby chicks for Easter. And I said, "You're not going to use this kind of story. There's very limited television news time, and to waste it on this kind of story…the city is burning down." *Yes, we need a calming influence, we need to show the viewers that life goes on, that there's another perspective*. And they sent me down, and we did an interview out in the median strip, between Eutaw, Howard Street…pretty spring day, I was in my light flowered dress, my little blonde hair, and little baby chicks, and a spokesman from the health department, telling us that we probably shouldn't do this, dye these chicks for Easter. We had to stop the interview to allow the National Guard troops to march behind us, so they wouldn't spoil our pretty picture that was in the frame of the camera.

And they made me go on the air that night…report this story as if nothing else was going on in Baltimore. And I said to myself, *that'll never happen again.* Something'll happen to the film. On the way back from the story, something will happen to the film—*[gasps]* Rolled out of the car! I can't imagine what happened to it!—because it was so embarrassing. But that's, you know, was the attitude then. They wouldn't want women doing stories of violence, having the viewers think I had been put in harm's way, or that there weren't things like this still going on. They thought it would be a calming influence.

Nyasha: So did the story go on?

Susan White-Bowden: M-hm. Oh, yes. It went on! So did I! Big smile on my face…"Happy Easter! The City of Baltimore's burning down." …That never happened. *[laughter]*

Jack Bowden: I remember, too, the station manager wanted me to do something, to sort of give, to say something was wrong that had happened, or to give kind of a lecture. And I said, I can't do that. I'm a reporter, I'm just going to tell what happened, I'm not taking a position on anything in this, I'm reporting on what's going on in our community—for the entire community! And he leaned on me pretty hard, and I finally said, no, I'm not going to do it, you want somebody to do that, you'd better send somebody else, I'm not going to.

Nyasha: Who did he want you to lecture?

Jack Bowden: The community. The black community, about something that had happened in my story that day. And I said no. I'm just telling them what's happened. People can decide for themselves what's right and what's wrong. I'm not getting into that. That's not my job.

Susan White-Bowden: And it probably wasn't the way you believed anyway.

Jack Bowden: No. *[laughs]*

Susan White-Bowden: They wanted you to preach the company belief policy.

So a lot of things changed. A lot of things. Race relations, business relations, how you reported the news, who was allowed to report the news, the whole look of…*life* changed.

Jack Bowden: But it took a while for those feelings to abate because there was a lot of anger and resentment on both sides for what happened, but the community began to grow

after that. There were still problems ahead, and we went through some tough times in the future, but it was the beginning of real change.

Nyasha: So when did you actually first hear about the riots erupting?

Jack Bowden: When I was in that restaurant. I don't know if that was how I heard about it. I think I knew that something had happened and it was just beginning, but I heard about the curfew, and that they were clamping down, basically martial law.

Nyasha: Do you remember what time the curfew was?

Jack Bowden: I don't. Depending on the time of the year, it was probably about eight o' clock, something like that. Giving people time to get home from work and stay there. But of course, not everybody obeyed the curfew, and that was where you had the clashes.

Nyasha: And do you remember?

Susan White-Bowden: I don't. I'm thinking, and I'll tell you, if I went through that April 1968 film, and saw what I did and what I didn't do, it would refresh my memory. I think they probably, after that story, whatever *that* story was, told me to go home and stay there until things calmed down.

Jack Bowden: Because she was just a *woman*.

Susan White-Bowden: Because I was just…you know, stay out there in Carroll County where you'll be safe and don't make trouble!

Nyasha: Since you're in the news, I don't know how this worked, but where did the bulk of your information come from? Was it you going out there?

Jack Bowden: Yes. Oh yeah.

Susan White-Bowden: And the Associated Press and UPI Wire Service.

Jack Bowden: Oh sure, I mean—

Susan White-Bowden: We had the wire machines in the newsroom, and when you see old films of old newsrooms, they have these machines spewing paper, and just constantly printing news stories. That was a big source of information.

Jack Bowden: Plus, when we would listen to the police radio. So, if a fire broke out, it went from this neighborhood, they'd put something out there and then one would pop up over here, and you'd just go wherever the story was. But every day, of course, we went to the Fifth Regiment Armory to see what they were doing, what they were up to, and what *they* were hearing.

Susan White-Bowden: It was a press briefing. That what it…they would hold a press briefing every morning as to what had happened overnight, and what—

Jack Bowden: And you figure out where you're going and what you're going to do…

Susan White-Bowden: But mostly you had to follow—because things were happening so quickly—you would to follow the police radio, the police and fire radios.

Jack Bowden: And we were limited, we were out there but we were also targets sometimes; we were in marked cars. And people would throw things at us; some of the cars, not mine, but some cars were shot at. So…I remember being trapped in traffic one time, and a crowd jumped the car…we got out of it somehow. But I thought, *whew*, if they get in this car and get us, we're going to be in sad shape! So there was that. But it was very much a black-and-white conflict that had spilled over. I understood what they were feeling, but it was scary at times.

Nyasha: Is that what kept you going out, though? The fact that you understood—

Jack Bowden: Well, that, plus it was my job! I mean, that's one of the things you did. And it wasn't every day, I mean, sometimes…I mean, there were lots of people in the community who were happy to see us, and could tell their story, I mean there were only…it was really a minority who were really that violent. The majority of the community was suffering, from the fires, from the National Guardsmen in their community, from the curfews, not being able to work, not being able to live their normal lives, and they were losing jobs. But others who were angry, but not violent, wanted to talk about it, wanted to express why this was going on, and so we did that too. You just had to be out there all the time, and sometimes it was a little scary. But most of the time, no. People just wanted to communicate what they were feeling and thinking and wanting.

Nyasha: Did you want to add something?

Susan White-Bowden: There were people like who wanted to go out and do the human interest stories, but there were also photographers who didn't want to go. You know, they were afraid, they'd kind of hide under the desk while they were pointing cameramen to go here, go there. So it was just like any other human situation; the various people reacted in different ways.

Jack Bowden: Yeah, I mean, when AIDS came along, there were cameramen who wouldn't go on a story to interview anybody with AIDS because they were sure they would catch it. So you could only go with the cameramen who were willing to go out on those stories.

Nyasha: But you didn't have much of a choice?

Jack Bowden: Oh, no, we could—

Susan White-Bowden: Yeah, you could decline to cover a story—

Jack Bowden: But if you're a reporter, and you want to cover the news, I mean, this is a huge story! A terrible story, all kinds of tragedy involved, starting with the initial tragedy of Dr. King, but nevertheless a tremendous story.

Susan White-Bowden: There were people much later—entirely different subject—Three Mile Island, the nuclear plant, had an accident, and they feared nuclear reaction and leakage, and a lot of people wouldn't go cover that story. I did, but there were cameramen who thought that it would keep them from fathering children, so they weren't going to go anywhere near that power plant. And they had a right to bow out of doing that story.

Nyasha: So would you say that Martin Luther King, his death, would you say that it stayed in the news along with the riots, or did the riots take over?

Jack Bowden: Oh, yeah. And there was the investigation all along, trying to find out all kind of conspiracy theories, who was behind it, was it just one man, just like the Kennedy assassination, or was it more? So yeah, that was a huge story.

Nyasha: And do you remember watching TV coverage of other stations in the riots?

Jack Bowden: Oh, sure. Well, that's what we did, I mean, you always watch the other stations; you knew pretty much what your station was doing, so you wanted to see what they were doing, how somebody covered the same story you covered, did they do it better than you—

Susan White-Bowden: Or did they get something that you missed—

Jack Bowden: It was friendly competition, and you wanted to beat them, and sometimes you did and sometimes you didn't. That's how you learned and grew.

Nyasha: And do you remember your impression? Did you think it was accurate, or did you think it was skewed, or—

Jack Bowden: I don't remember. I don't remember.

Susan White-Bowden: I do think I remember, and your story of Wiley Daniels, I do think I remember that he probably got more interviews because he was black, that they would open up to him—

Jack Bowden: Sure. Of course.

Susan White-Bowden: And that's normal. So you would watch his report because you were going to get information, and a story that nobody else had. So during that period, I can't remember anybody else, but I do remember concentrating on his reports.

Nyasha: Did you watch the national news? I guess you did.

Jack Bowden: Oh, yeah.

Nyasha: And how did you think they portrayed the situation in Baltimore?

Jack Bowden: I don't think they did a lot on Baltimore. There were other cities—

Susan White-Bowden: Philadelphia, Washington, D.C., but at that period, I think it was another case of Baltimore being just that place in between, it was an "also." "And also, in Baltimore…"

Jack Bowden: Sure, there was D.C., and Philadelphia, and New York, and all that…and Baltimore…

Nyasha: So there wasn't anything—

Jack Bowden: But it was mostly what we sent them.

Nyasha: So, being that you went out and interviewed people, and you were reporting, what was your impression of the neighborhoods that were affected?

Jack Bowden: That they were devastated.

Susan White-Bowden: Sad.

Jack Bowden: Sad. Most of the people were just…stunned by what was going on. Because most of the people weren't participating in setting the fires or looting the stores. And they had to live there. And they were being burned out, homes were being burned along with the stores because you couldn't always contain the fires. And there were accusations, of course, that they were purposely letting the fires burn out of control; I don't know if that was true. But it was just devastated. The people were just traumatized by what was—

Susan White-Bowden: They became the victims. That's what so sad. They people who lived in the neighborhood, the black people who lived in the neighborhood often became the victims and the hardest-hit, and life was made even more difficult. It was a struggle to put their lives back together again. But it did help the process…ultimately. But old neighborhoods had to be rebuilt, and that's after things settled down, *that's* when real effort was made to…people helping people.

Jack Bowden: Yeah, I mean, because King had led the peaceful, the nonviolent protests, like Gandhi. I mean, there had been so many protests before that had been effective without being violent—except, of course, some of the protesters suffered violence—but things were slowly happening. But it was, it was a piecemeal kind of thing: an amusement park, a movie theater, a restaurant, department stores…took a long while, it took a lot of protests, and a lot of people got beat up and arrested in the process. And this

was a different kind of reaction, and I think it finally got everybody's attention and things began to change.

Nyasha: So do you remember the violence that was occurring? What type of violence was—

Jack Bowden: Oh, sure. Well, people were…people were being shot, there were store owners guarding their stores, and they were shooting at people. The police and the National—well, the police were shooting people. And people were shooting each other. And there were beatings, and all kinds of attacks, and mostly it was a black-and-white kind of thing. It was ugly, it was terrible. Just seeing your community divide that way and attack each other. But, it came to an end. And then things began to change.

Nyasha: And do you remember the extent of the arrests as well?

Jack Bowden: I don't. I don't. I don't even remember how many were killed; I don't think it was that many, but it was still too many.

Susan White-Bowden: I'm sure there were many cases of people in the safe, white suburbs who just thought, get a lid on this and then let's get back to life as it was. So it wasn't that everybody was willing to make change, and it was a struggle.

Nyasha: And you lived in Carroll County—

Susan White-Bowden: Carroll County.

Nyasha: And you lived in Mount Washington.

Jack Bowden: Yeah, Baltimore. Yeah.

Nyasha: So, were the National Guard in Carroll County?

Susan White-Bowden: No. There was nothing going on out there.

Jack Bowden: You only saw them in the inner city.

Nyasha: So they were in your neighborhood, or near it—

Jack Bowden: No.

Susan White-Bowden: In the city proper, in the downtown areas, is where they were.

Nyasha: And how did their presence, like when you went out, how did their presence make you feel?

Jack Bowden: It was strange…to see soldiers patrolling the streets of the city. With guns. And as I said, they weren't supposed to have bullets. Some of them did.

Susan White-Bowden: Some of them said, "I'm not going in there without protection, without real bullets." And without permission, they'd take bullets. They didn't tell their authority, they just had them with them. That was scary.

Jack Bowden: That day in the park, I saw some loading bullets. I knew people were going to get shot, if Wiley hadn't gotten up and stopped them. But that day we marched with them down North Avenue, it was as if an occupying force had come into France or whatever during World War II. *We're in control here, and we'll be back. You behave or…*
It was…I can understand how they felt, the hostility, because it was bizarre.

Nyasha: So you wouldn't say that you felt safer that they were there?

Jack Bowden: No, because I was only there with them, covering them. I mean, I felt unsafe once they left and, as I say, we were the only two white people standing in that street, but did it make the neighborhood safer? I don't know. I really don't know.

Nyasha: So, you said nothing was going on in Carroll County.

Susan White-Bowden: No. Nothing.

Nyasha: So there was no kind of mood, or opinion on the riots?

Susan White-Bowden: Well, see, I spent so much time at work, I really don't know what my neighbors were thinking about what was going on in Baltimore. "That's *their* problem," probably is what they were thinking. Um…no.

Jack Bowden: Yeah, I mean, in neighborhoods such as mine, which was, I don't know if it was all white, or certainly predominantly white. But every neighborhood, you heard talk. "I wonder if it's going to happen here." "Will they come here?" So everybody was nervous and apprehensive, but the fact is that it was confined primarily to the inner city, the downtown area.

Nyasha: So how did your life and activities change during the riots?

Jack Bowden: *[laughs]* I worked constantly.

Susan White-Bowden: And I probably went home and didn't work. I'd have to check, as I say, I'd love to check that news film. After that, stories changed then, as I did more people trying to put their lives back together, people helping people, people actually organizing efforts to improve, to achieve equality, and that's when it really all began, but it took years and year of work and effort on the part of a *lot* of organizations and individuals.

Jack Bowden: Yeah, and you began to see more minority representation in the legislature, for instance. And gaining influence and power.

Nyasha: So how else do you think Baltimore changed after the riots?

Jack Bowden: Boy.

Susan White-Bowden: I think the leaders have changed, I think people weren't as complacent to let things stand, television stations made the effort they should have made on their own to hire black as well as whites. For example, I knew why I was hired. I was a minority hire. I was hired because they needed somebody to dress up the news set. It was white males. And if I hadn't been fairly attractive and had blonde hair, I never would have been hired. I knew why the door was open. But you know what? I didn't care why the door was open. I knew that I would be able to then achieve what I wanted to with that job. And though I wasn't able to do the type of stories that I wanted to do during the riots, and for some times afterward, eventually I got there. It was a slow process. But it evolved. So I always tell young people, don't worry about why they opened the door. Just get in there. And use that opportunity.

But you saw the change, you saw the effort; some people liked it, some people didn't. Some people said, "I don't want to have this rammed down my throat. We're doing it at our own speed." And some people had to be pushed. But there was change. It did change things. It wasn't just business as usual.

Nyasha: And do you know how the businesses were affected, or how they changed after that?

Jack Bowden: Well, a lot of the small businesses never reopened. That was part of what happened in the neighborhoods. There were no stores, no jobs, and some of them never recovered. But the integration of the larger, commercial places continued, probably accelerated.

And of course we were going through this change of everything moving to the suburbs anyway. Downtown was dying because all those malls were out in the suburbs and people didn't go downtown anymore. About the only thing…well, now they've got the Hippodrome back, but Lexington Market is still there. But all the department stores eventually closed. So the whole way of life changed. And the city changed. Then we got the Inner Harbor. So it moved there, but beyond the Inner Harbor it was still a different world.

Susan White-Bowden: And things such as the City Fair evolved, from the riots, directly.

Jack Bowden: That's right, I'd forgotten that.

Susan White-Bowden: Bringing in all the neighborhoods together, in one spot, downtown, to celebrate the differences of the ethnic communities. I mean, that was a major accomplishment, and a major vehicle for change. Things like that. But the City Fair was…they weren't sure that it could be done without violence. And it set the example, that if you include *everyone*, that this kind of major festival celebration can be held without any violence, people coming from all sections of the city. And those kind of things evolved, and each ethnic group would organize their own fair, so that people could come in and taste Polish food and do Polish dancing…and that, all that, was under the direction of William Donald Schaefer. You know, I'm thinking, you mentioned George Collins, I don't know if you could interview him, but he would be a good one to interview, because he was probably at *The Afro-American* at that time.

Jack Bowden: Oh, he was.

Susan White-Bowden: And then was the first black to be hired at Channel 2—

Jack Bowden: In the news department. Chuck was the first one.

Susan White-Bowden: And he's still in the area. He's still on the radio—

Jack Bowden: At Morgan. No, not Morgan…Baltimore Community College. You've got to realize, too, the people of my generation—and I'm pretty old—I didn't have much exposure to minorities until I went in the Army. And then you really got to know people as individuals, not stereotypes. And I think that had a tremendous impact, that a lot of people, especially during the Korean War and Vietnam, who had led segregated lives, changed. It just changed our whole perspective on people. They became good friends, buddies, who would die for each other. They couldn't have imagined that before. And that began to change the whole community as well. But even when I went to the University of Maryland, the number of minorities was very low. This was back in the '50s. So it was a long, long process.

Nyasha: So I'm guessing your interactions with people of other races probably didn't change too much, since you were involved—

Jack Bowden: No, it didn't, because as she said, we hung around with people we worked with. Now, there were more people, there were more minorities coming in after that, and they became part of our circle of friends as well, yeah.

Nyasha: But I'm guessing Mount Washington and Carroll County…did they get affected by the riots, did anything—

Jack Bowden: No.

Susan White-Bowden: They haven't really changed yet. *[laughter]*And this is 2007. They're a little slow.

Nyasha: So you couldn't see any effects that came from the riots?

Susan White-Bowden: No, no, I don't see that.

Jack Bowden: I can't say that they were directly…an effect from the riots. It was part of the evolution that slowly followed that.

Susan White-Bowden: Carroll County is mostly, I mean, there are people out there who work for the…there was a, I guess there still is a branch, a county bureau of the Baltimore Sun in Carroll County. Some of the reporters who worked there called it "Cow County", C-O-W, Cow County. It's a very rural community, county…mostly farmers, who have been there for long…for generations.

Jack Bowden: Let me remind you, too, they also had a pretty active Ku Klux Klan out there.

Susan White-Bowden: Yes. In Carroll County. And that wasn't too long ago.

Jack Bowden: Well into, what was it? '70s.

Susan White-Bowden: '70s. After the riots.

Jack Bowden: I remember growing up in West Baltimore, which was all white then; this was Walbrook, the end of North Avenue. And we had this little lot on my block where we'd play softball or touch football, and I remember this black guy would come out and play touch football with us. Harvey Jones. I remember his name. Young guy, we all really liked him. He was the janitor in the apartments at the end of the block. He was a janitor. He was a college graduate. He had graduated from Morgan, and his dream was to get in the post office. And I thought…it wasn't until years later, that I got older and I thought, he was probably the only college graduate in the neighborhood. And he was a janitor. And that's the only interaction with a person of color that I had at that age other than the Arabs *[pronounced AY-rabs, i.e. Arabbers]*, the ones who would come into the neighborhoods, they still have some in Baltimore; have you ever heard of the Arabs, are you from here?

Susan White-Bowden: No, South Carolina.

Jack Bowden: They would have a horse-drawn carriage, and they would sell fruits and vegetables.

Susan White-Bowden: Produce, from the wagon.

Jack Bowden: Yeah. And they still have some.

Nyasha: Yeah, I've seen them, actually.

Jack Bowden: That's what they called them, Arabs. I don't know why they called them Arabs. And they would come down the alleys, not the main streets. Down the alleys, and you'd buy produce from them. And they were the only people of color I ever saw, when I was a child.

Susan White-Bowden: I did a lot of stories with them, because they were so much fun. They'd, "Ge-e-e-t your cantaloupes here! Lopes! Lopes! Get your cantaloupes!"

Jack Bowden: Yeah, what was it? "Watermelon, red to the rind," and soft crabs and all that stuff.

Susan White-Bowden: They had stables, where they housed the ponies and the horses. It was a wonderful, wonderful business.

Jack Bowden: But it was a whole different world then, you didn't have many supermarkets, or anything. But that was it, I mean, your exposure to other people in my childhood was incredibly…the schools were segregated, you just didn't see other people.

Susan White-Bowden: And I know eventually, I mean after the riots, I looked—this was throughout the '70s—I looked for stories that were inspirational about black people who

were realizing their dreams, making a difference, and their families. Some of the favorite stories I did, in the twenty-two years, involved black people, because they could be…they had so much to gain. Because they had started from so little.

I remember Howard Rollins, the actor, lived on North Charles Street, I mean, on North Avenue. North Avenue. And his mother lived there, after he went off and became an actor, and was nominated for an Academy Award for *Ragtime*. And I went down to interview her, and it was so wonderful. She came out on North Avenue and danced in the street. She said, "Oh, God, Susan! This is just proof that you work hard and do what you want, and dream and pray, that it can happen. It can happen! You can achieve success!" and she danced around, in the middle of the street, and my photographer is following her, and everybody in the neighborhood is clapping, and it was fabulous. But it was good television! And it was exciting. So there were lots of opportunities to show success, because there hadn't been much in the '60s.

Nyasha: So is there anything else that, I don't know, throughout the interview that you started to remember, or anything you may have left out about the riots that—

Jack Bowden: No, I mean, my memories aren't…it's been a *long* time. And I haven't looked at the scripts or anything like that, or the film, so these are just the things that stood out in my memory; I'm sure if I saw the film, a lot of it would come back, but…that's it.

Susan White-Bowden: I can't remember the date, the other story that I shared with the committee that is working on getting the grant for this project, involved the Flower Mart. Now, I don't know if that was the year *after* the riots, or if it was the year before.

Jack Bowden: I don't remember either. I think it was after.

Susan White-Bowden: But I would love to find out that date, because that was another experience where I went down to cover a "woman's story." Flowers and crab cakes and big hats and flower booths…and a riot occurred there. Because it was so segregated,

because it was the club ladies from Roland Park, and women's clubs throughout the outskirts of Baltimore who staged this every year, and had since the 1800s. And this one year, we were there, covering the story, it was either before or after. This crowd of young black men came across one of the squares—

Jack Bowden: They were really just kids.

Susan White-Bowden: Well, kids. Teenagers. Came across the square and just started upturning booths, and throwing stones, and upsetting the whole festival. People were crawling under boxwood bushes, and trying to get away, and my cameraman had his camera taken from him, and it was smashed to the ground, and I was crawling under a bush to get away and tearing up my stockings, and blood was spurting from businessmen who were trying to get away, and being hit over the head with pieces of board from the booths and things like that. And I ran back to the news van, and called in, "You've got to send somebody down here, there's something, this is a riot that's going on, you have no idea what's going on here." And they sent Jack down. And he took over covering it, and they even brought in mounted patrol, policemen—

Jack Bowden: Well, see, that's her memory. I was already there. 'Cause I remember the surge. And yeah, they did, they brought in mounted police. I'll never forget the sound of the billy clubs hitting skulls. I remember watching these mounted cops chasing these kids. And I didn't see the kind of violence she did, there was some purse-snatching and stuff. But these kids would run into the vestibules of homes; they'd run up the steps and cower against the door, and I remember the horses climbing the steps, and the cops reaching in, and I couldn't see who they were hitting, but I could hear the sound of these skulls splitting open. And then seeing them carried away with these gaping wounds, and blood…ugh, it was awful.

Susan White-Bowden: That was another case of getting back to station, and even though the film camera had been smashed, I said to my news director, "Let me go on and do a first person." Let me explain what I saw, what I witnessed, and what I experienced. He

said, no, no, no. Our viewers would be *very* uncomfortable with that. With seeing you in harm's way, or knowing that you had been in harm's way. No, you go home. You go back to Carroll County. And I went back, went home, and watched Jack do the report on television. So that was one of the changes. And that put an end to the Flower Mart for a while.

And then, a couple of years before it came back, and it came back in Center Plaza, downtown. Eventually, I don't think it was until the '80s that it came back to Mount Vernon Square, to where the Washington Monument is. So that was one of the things that was changed, and it was an evolution about. And *then* they brought in minority club women; they made an effort to make it a festival that invited and welcomed everyone.

Jack Bowden: There were also, of course, the riots in Cambridge on the Eastern Shore, which is all part of the process of changing the state, and the race relations in it. But there was more than just *that* riot, there were other explosions in the state.

Nyasha: You mean, in 1968?

Jack Bowden: Oh, no. I don't even remember what that year was.

Susan White-Bowden: Yeah, we'd have to look that up, or you could in the newspapers; the Cambridge riots and the riots at the Flower Mart, to find out what year that was.


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